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# THE PROGRESS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT

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## THE PROGRESS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TOWARD SELF-GOVERNMENT<sup>1</sup>

THE opening of the Filipino Assembly by Secretary Taft on the sixteenth of October was an event of significance in the carrying-out of America's unique colonial policy of attempting to train the people of her tropical dependencies for self-government. The importance of the event makes the present an opportune time for reviewing the political progress of the Filipino people.

There is little reliable information concerning the character of the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands at the time of the Spanish occupation in the forepart of the sixteenth century. The few descriptions we have are in many respects contradictory.<sup>2</sup> Among ethnologists the weight of opinion supports the conclusion that the population was then, as now, principally<sup>3</sup> of Malay ethnic stock.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. David P. Barrows estimates the population of the islands in 1591, on the basis of the number of tributes paid, at 667,612.<sup>5</sup> These Malay peoples seem to have come to the Philippines in a more or less continuous migration, lasting for several centuries, from the region of Sumatra and the Malay peninsula. They were a sea-faring people, and came in sail boats containing from 50 to 100 persons each. The boats were called in the Malay language *balangay*. Usually one family traveled in each

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a revision of an address delivered before the students of Cornell University, March 1, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., on this subject, the early descriptions contained in the first ten volumes of Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*.

<sup>3</sup> The one important exception being the Negritoes or pygmy blacks, who at the present time number probably somewhere between twenty-five and fifty thousand. Cf. Worcester, *The Non-Christian Tribes of Northern Luzon*, in *Philippine Journal of Science* I, no. 8 (October, 1906), pp. 805-812.

<sup>4</sup> Barrows, *History of the Population*, in *Census of the Philippine Islands*, I, p. 411; Jenks, A. E., *The Bontoc Igorot*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Phil. Census*, II, p. 17.

balangay. The family was of the patriarchal character and comprised the old man, his children and grandchildren, and all the servants and slaves. These family groups in time came to be called balangay, later *barangay*, after the word meaning boat. The head man was called *datu*, meaning grandfather.<sup>1</sup> His authority was absolute, at least in theory. These barangay appear to have been united into a loose form of town government, the chieftainship of the town being hereditary.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence of the existence of any such democratic assemblies for the election of chiefs and the conduct of tribal affairs as those of our Germanic forefathers, which contributed so much to the subsequent capacity of Teutonic peoples for self-government.

These primitive Filipino people are said to have gained a livelihood by hunting and fishing and a rude form of agriculture. Some of them are reported to have been acquainted with an alphabet of Sanskrit origin.<sup>3</sup> A few had been converted to Mohammedanism before migrating to the islands. The religion of most of these early Filipino people, however, appears to have been a combination of animism and sabianism. The worship of the spirits of their ancestors played a very prominent rôle in their lives. Coupled with this ancestor worship, possibly a part of it, was the worship of the sun, moon and stars. They practiced divination, believed in witches, and buried slaves alive with their warrior dead.<sup>4</sup>

The following extracts are taken from two of the most authoritative early descriptions of these people.

Legaspi, about 1569 after having been in the islands four years, wrote concerning the Filipinos of Cebu :

These people wear clothes, but they go barefooted. Their dress is

<sup>1</sup> McGovern, D. O., *Civil Government in the Philippines*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>2</sup> "The tribe itself as a body politic is unknown in this archipelago. The Malayan has never by his own effort achieved so important a political organization. Such great and effective confederacies as we find among the North American Indians are far beyond the capacity of the Filipino of any grade." Barrows, in *Phil. Census*, I, p. 453.

<sup>3</sup> *Phil. Census*, 1903, I, p. 412; Leroy, *Philippine Life in Town and Country*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Plasencia, Juan de, *Customs of the Tagologs (1588-1591)*, in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, VII, pp. 185-196.

made of cotton or of a kind of grass resembling raw silk. . . . They are naturally . . . distrustful, and if one has treated them ill they will never come back. . . . They are a people extremely vicious, fickle [and] untruthful. . . . When these people give or lend anything to one another, the favor must be repaid double, even if between parents and children, or between brothers. At times they sell their own children when there is little need or necessity for doing so.

Privateering and robbery have a natural attraction for them. Whenever the occasion presents itself, they rob one another, even if they be neighbors or relatives. . . . Any native who possesses a basketful of rice will not seek for more, or do any further work until it is finished. Thus does their idleness surpass their covetousness. . . .

I believe that these natives could be easily subdued by good treatment and the display of kindness.<sup>1</sup>

Francisco de Sande, who was governor of the Philippines from 1575 to 1580, said concerning the natives in a letter to Philip IV of Spain:

The natives are all very idle. If they would apply themselves to work a little of the time, they could have all they wanted, but as it is a hot country and they are barbarians, they go naked. Nevertheless, all know how to raise cotton and silk, and everywhere they know how to spin and weave for clothing. . . . In the mountains there are wild boars, deer and buffalo, which they can kill in any desired number. Rice, which is the bread of the country, grows in abundance. Therefore, they are afflicted by no poverty, and only seek to kill one another, considering it a great triumph to cut off one another's heads and take captives.<sup>2</sup>

In reading over these and other early descriptions of the primitive Filipino people, one is impressed by the similarity between their mental characteristics and the typical mental characteristics of the Malay race as they are described to-day. The ethnologist Keane, for example, says: The typical Malay is "normally quiet, reserved and taciturn, but under excitement subject to fits of blind fury; fairly intelligent, polite and ceremonious, but uncertain, untrustworthy and even treacherous;

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Phil. Census, I, p. 493.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 493, 494.

daring, adventurous and reckless; musical; not distinctly cruel, though indifferent to physical suffering in others.”<sup>1</sup>

We shall probably not be far from the truth if we conclude that the Filipino people at the close of the sixteenth century were a fairly typical Malay people of the tropics, just emerging from a state of barbarism; and that their civilization was on about the same plane as that of their ethnic kinsmen, the Bontoc Igorot of to-day, with the differences that usually distinguish hill tribes from people of the plains.

Such then was the raw material on which Spain began her work in the Philippines. What sort of a finished product did she turn out as the result of three and a third centuries of colonial administration?

If we are to understand aright Spain's work and influence in the Philippines, we must keep firmly in mind two important facts: First, that Spain's dominant purpose in the Philippines was neither commercial nor political, but religious; it was the conversion of the natives to Christianity, “and the establishment of a great Christian outpost on the frontiers of heathendom.” It is not intended to maintain that political and commercial motives were absent from the minds of Spanish rulers in the extension of the Spanish domains, but that they were, at least in this case, secondary to the religious motive. To Spain the Philippines in the early days were much more of the nature of a mission than of a colony.

The second fact to be constantly born in mind is corollary to the first: it is that during almost the entire period of the Spanish régime practically the only Spaniards in the islands, outside of the few principal cities, were the members of the religious orders commonly known as the friars, who were scattered throughout the archipelago. A monastery and church were established in nearly every village. By a special dispensation of the church the friars quite generally performed the duties of parish priest in addition to the regular duties of their orders. They often had Filipino assistants. In some cases there were Filipino parish priests, and Filipinos occasionally held higher

<sup>1</sup> Keane, *Man Past and Present*, p. 229.

offices in the church. Whatever influence Spain had upon the masses of Filipinos during the three centuries and more of her rule was wielded principally through the friars. It was the friar alone who lived in touch with the people, it was he alone who understood the native dialects. He supervised the tilling of their soil and the harvesting of their crops. He was their teacher. It was to him they went for assistance when in need, for comfort when in trouble. He was their confessor and guide in spiritual matters, and all his acts carried with them that mystical religious sanction which an ignorant and superstitious people are wont to attribute to their priesthood.

The early friars, with few exceptions, appear to have been zealous and conscientious in their work, and to have accomplished much. The work of converting the natives progressed rapidly,<sup>1</sup> and by the end of the seventeenth century the islands are said to have become practically Christianized except for the Mohammedans of the southern islands and the pagan hill tribes of the interior.

In referring to the rapid conversion of the Filipinos to Christianity, it should be noted that in many cases the substance of the old heathen religion was maintained under the forms and names of Christianity. Sinibaldo de Mas, the Spanish diplomat in the Orient, wrote in 1841 :

In disregard of the monks, the Indians secretly circumcise their children. The banyan tree is held sacred. They burn incense under it, which they obtain from the friars under various pretences. How strangely are the rites of idolatry mingled with Christian observance ! "There is no driving out of them," says a *padre*, "the cursed belief that the spirits of their ancestors are in the woods and among the roots of bamboos, and that they can bring good or evil among them."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the persistence of these old religious ideas, and despite the other gross superstitions which permeated and continue to permeate the Christianity of the great majority of the

<sup>1</sup> Friar Ignacio writes in 1585 that according to the common opinion of his day there had been converted and baptized more than four hundred thousand souls. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, I, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Leroy, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 128.



Filipinos, much progress was made, and for upwards of two centuries and a half, that is from about 1571 to the forepart of the nineteenth century, the friars, by their self-sacrifice and religious devotion to duty, exercised a potent and beneficent influence over the Filipino people. During that period they probably accomplished more in the direction of uplifting and civilizing a Malay people than was ever before accomplished in the world's history. In the year 1820 Crawfurd, "the historian of the Indian Archipelago, who lived at the court of the Sultan of Java as British resident," could say:

Almost every other country of the [Indian] Archipelago is at this day, in point of wealth, power and civilization, in a worse state than when Europeans connected themselves with them three centuries back. The Philippines alone have improved in civilization, wealth and populousness. When discovered most of the tribes were a race of half-naked savages, inferior to all the great tribes who were pushing, at the same time, an active commerce, and enjoying a respectable share of the necessities and comforts of a civilized state. Upon the whole, they are at present superior in almost everything to any of the other races [of the Archipelago].<sup>1</sup>

The population of the islands is estimated to have increased about 300 per cent from 1591 to 1819.<sup>2</sup>

In bearing witness to the beneficent results of the work of the friars during this period we must not ignore its defects. The people were treated as children, not as men and women; they were taught to believe and to obey, not to think and depend upon themselves. The priest spoke with divine authority; to doubt him was sacrilege; to disobey him was sin; to criticize him was blasphemy. Such a training might make pious souls and prepare them for the world hereafter; it could not make self-reliant men and prepare them for self-government in this world. The French explorer, La Pérouse, writing in the latter part of the eighteenth century, sums up this phase of the friars' work in the following language:

The only thought was to make Christians and never citizens. This

<sup>1</sup> Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago, etc.*, II, pp. 447, 448.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. Census, II, pp. 17, 18.

people was divided into parishes, and subjected to the most minute and extravagant observances. Each fault, each sin, is still punished by the rod. Failure to attend prayers and mass has its fixed penalty, and punishment is administered to men and women at the door of the church by order of the pastor. . . . No liberty is enjoyed: inquisitors and monks watch the consciences; the oidors (judges of the Audiencia), all private affairs; the governor, the most innocent movements, . . . in fine, the most beautiful and charming country in the world is *certainly the last that a free man would choose to live in.*<sup>1</sup>

The moral character of the friars, their attitude toward the natives and the attitude of the natives toward them seem to have undergone important changes during the nineteenth century, and particularly during the latter part of the century. The changes were gradual, and due to a variety of causes which time will not permit a discussion of here. Sufficient to say that as the result of many gifts and bequests the monastic orders had become very wealthy<sup>2</sup> by the beginning of the nineteenth century, and, contemporaneously with this increase of wealth, the friars had become more and more jealous of their power.<sup>3</sup> They opposed the bringing-out of more secular clergy from Spain, and they fought bitterly all attempts to instal Filipino priests at the head of curacies.<sup>4</sup> In their jealousy of power they opposed the reform movements undertaken by the Spanish home government during the latter half of the century, and put numerous obstacles in the way of the education and advancement of the masses.<sup>5</sup> There seems to be no question of the fact that during the nineteenth century the character of the friars greatly deteriorated. A large number of them broke all three of their monastic vows, their vow of poverty, their vow of chastity and their vow of obedience. They became possessed of large estates valued at many millions of dollars which they often used for their own individual benefit instead of for the advancement of the religious work of their orders. The vow

<sup>1</sup> Voyage de la Pérouse autour du monde (Paris, 1797), II, pp. 62, 350. Quoted by Blair and Robertson, I, pp. 77, 78. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Phil Census, I, pp. 35, 344-346.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 34; III, p. 594.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III, pp. 594, 595.

of chastity was widely broken.<sup>1</sup> Frequently the friars refused to carry out the decrees of their superiors. Commissioner Tavera in a recent article said,

it was a common thing for the bishops to call attention to the fact that the papal bulls and cédulas of the king were alike ignored—and such was indeed the case whenever the provincial heads of the four monastic orders in Manila set their veto on the bulls or cédulas.<sup>2</sup>

The friars being the only Spaniards in close touch with the people throughout the islands, the only ones possessing a thorough knowledge of the native dialects, and the persons through whom the decrees of the church and state must, for the most part, be carried out, had the power to side-track any legislation to which they were opposed. During the latter part of the century they seem to have used this power with a vengeance. It is not intended to assert that during this period all the friars were immoral and abused their power: there were many notable exceptions to whom too much credit cannot be given for highminded devotion to duty in trying times. Such men, however, unfortunately appear to have been in the minority. The opposition to the friars on the part of the Filipinos became very strong during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the insurrections during that period were directed more particularly against the friars than against the Spanish lay authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The first serious attempt on the part of the Spanish government to provide an adequate system of primary education for the Filipinos was made in 1863. Previous to that time

primary education in the Philippines consisted, one may say with a rough approximation to fairness, of the catechism and the little instruction in the Philippine dialects which was necessary in order for the

<sup>1</sup> A Spaniard who has lived in the islands for upwards of twenty years, who is a well educated and conservative man, and a member of the Catholic church, once told the writer that in his opinion at least ninety per cent of the friars, during the latter days of the Spanish régime, were immoral.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. Census, I, p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> In the revolution of 1898, 40 friars were killed and 300 were imprisoned. *Ibid.*, I, p. 35.

pupils to read the catechism and the few religious books that were translated into the dialects.<sup>1</sup>

In 1863 an elaborate scheme of secular primary education was adopted by Spain for the Philippines. It provided for the establishment of free public schools in all the villages of the Christianized parts of the islands. School attendance was to be made compulsory, and the curriculum was to include reading, writing, arithmetic, instruction in the Spanish language, history, agriculture and music.<sup>2</sup> By 1894 it is said that as many as 173 sets of official provisions regulating the public schools or otherwise relating to the education of the Filipinos had been passed. In few colonies could there have been found a better set of statutory laws and of administrative orders than in the Philippines during the latter years of the Spanish régime; in few, on the contrary, could there have been found a more corrupt and inefficient administration.

A comparatively small proportion of the children of the Islands attended the schools. Theoretically and according to law, secular public instruction was under the control of local school boards of a civil and lay character, and the friars were entrusted only with the supervision of religious instruction; practically the friars controlled the schools "in four towns out of five" and "managed everything about the schools to suit their own will, down almost to the last hours of Spanish rule."<sup>3</sup> Inadequate wages were paid to the teachers; and with few exceptions they were an inefficient lot. Most of the friars were opposed to the teaching of Spanish, fearing that it would result in emancipating the people from their control, and accordingly the much heralded primary instruction in Spanish was largely a farce. It is even said that teachers were "punished and threatened with deportation" for teaching Spanish, and in some cases actually deported.<sup>4</sup> Reading and writing were taught by means of the catechism; church dogma and the lives of the saints formed a prominent part of the instruction. Almost the only history taught was that of Spain, and that "under conventional

<sup>1</sup> Leroy, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. Census, III, pp. 578 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Leroy, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. Census, III, p. 595.

ensorship." The instruction in practical agriculture is described "as a sorry farce."<sup>1</sup> Pupils studied aloud and commonly recited in unison. In a word, the elaborate scheme for primary education, as it was carried out, was calculated to make weak and submissive parishioners, not independent, thinking men and self-governing citizens. As late as September, 1905 (after the American public schools had been in operation in the islands for several years), the superintendent of education said: "Of the 7,000,000 Christianized inhabitants of the Philippines, at least 6,500,000 are helplessly illiterate," contemplating by literacy "at least enough knowledge of a written speech to read the simple language of a newspaper and to set down and accurately keep accounts."<sup>2</sup>

In a discussion of the historic preparation of the Filipino people for self-government only a word need be said on the subject of higher education. At best the university and the few secondary schools reached only an insignificant number of the Filipino people. Some excellent work was done by these schools, and particularly by the Philippine nautical school and by the Municipal Atheneum of Manila under the charge of the Jesuits. But with slight qualification it may be said that the instruction given in all these institutions, from the University of Santo Tomás down to the normal school at Manila, was scholastic in the extreme. Mediæval theology, church history and metaphysics were the all-important subjects; they determined the tone of the institutions. The Spanish engineer probably did not understate the facts when at the close of the eighteenth century, he confessed that "in the sciences Spain was a hundred years behind France, and that in Manila they were a hundred years behind Spain."<sup>3</sup> Commissioner Tavera recently declared:

From the first days of the Spanish sovereignty until its final termination

<sup>1</sup> Phil. Census, III, p. 639.      <sup>2</sup> Rep. of Phil. Com., 1905, IV, p. 408 and note.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Blair and Robertson, I, p. 78. As late as the middle of the nineteenth century, the Rector of the University of Santo Tomas, the only university in the Philippines, declared that "Medicine and the natural sciences are materialistic and impious studies." Leroy, p. 207.

the object of all teaching appeared to be to avoid anything that was not genuinely Spanish and absolutely accepted by the traditional orthodoxy of the Catholic church. . . . All experimental science and all advances of the human mind in the line of independent thinking, which disregarded tradition and the influence of religious and empirical forms, were . . . anathema.<sup>1</sup>

In considering the preparation of a people for the exercise of self-government, the most important question to ask is: What has been their experience? For if political history teaches anything, it is that democracies develop slowly, and that capacity for self-government is only attained as the result of long training. Here, if nowhere else, people must learn to do by doing. What experience then in popular self-government did the Filipino people have during the three and a third centuries of Spanish rule?

There were three main divisions of the Philippine government during Spanish times. At the head was the central government with headquarters in Manila, presided over by a governor-general with vice-regal powers, having by his side the *Audiencia* or supreme court. The central government had a veto on the legislation of all inferior political units. The Filipino people had practically no part in the central government. Their small representation on the council of administration was ineffectual.<sup>2</sup> Below the central government came the provincial government. Each province was presided over by a Spanish official known as the *alcalde*, upon whom were imposed the combined duties of judge and governor down to the year 1886, when governors were appointed in eighteen provinces and the *alcaldes* were limited to the duties of judges. The governor was assisted by an advisory council, of which only a minority of the members were elected—"and these not by the people at large, but by the heads . . . of the towns of the province."<sup>3</sup> The Filipino people therefore had little voice in the provincial government and exercised no control.

The character of the town government underwent several im-

<sup>1</sup> Phil. Census, I, p. 336

<sup>2</sup> Schurman, J. G., *Philippine Affairs*, pp. 29-34.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

portant changes during the Spanish régime. The town officials were, with few exceptions, Filipinos. For a long time petty governors (known as *gobernadorcillos*), were appointed to rule each town. These petty governors were simply the agents or tools of the provincial governors, or, more often, of the local friars. By the passage of the Maura law in 1893 the form of town government was changed, and additional power was extended to the Filipinos in local affairs. The municipal government under this reform law is thus described in the preliminary report of the Schurman Philippine Commission <sup>1</sup>:

The municipal councils were . . . not bodies controlled by the people. In addition to constant inspection and directions from the provincial junta, every municipal council was liable to warning, admonition, fines and suspension at the hands of the governor of the province. And to make the control from above still more effective, the governor-general exercised jurisdiction over all the municipal tribunals, and was vested with power to discharge members or even the entire tribunal itself.

Even when municipal government had been thus circumscribed the masses of people had no share in it. Suffrage was limited to the "principal people" of the town, and elections were indirect. The "principal people" were present and past office-holders and persons paying fifty dollars land tax. The "principal people" as thus constituted, elected by ballot twelve delegates, and these [delegates] elected the municipal tribunal, which . . . governed the town.

The little power which did belong to the people under this system was largely usurped by the local clergy; for "by custom, and subsequently by law, to the parish priest was given complete supervisory power over the municipal government of his town."<sup>2</sup> The political administration of the Philippines in Spanish times has been well characterized as "a sort of outer garment under which the living body is ecclesiastical."<sup>3</sup>

During the latter years of the Spanish régime the Filipino was not secure in the possession of his property. If he had anything that the friar or other Spanish officials wished, it was

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 182, 183.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. Census, I, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Blair and Robertson, I, p. 49.

liable to be taken from him either in the guise of taxes, forced church contributions,<sup>1</sup> or in settlement of some trumped-up charge brought against him in the courts. He was accordingly deprived of the ordinary incentives to providence and thrift, and these virtues he has never developed. We must conclude, therefore, that in experience in self-government, as well as in education and in all the important civic virtues, the close of the nineteenth century found the masses of the Filipino people sadly lacking.

Fortunately the latter decades of the nineteenth century gave promise of better things. By the removal of many trade restrictions and by the opening of the Suez canal, the Filipinos were being brought into contact with the outside world. Filipino students began to study in Europe, and the intelligent classes came to appreciate more and more the backward condition of their country, and to chafe under the yoke of Spanish mediævalism. The revolts against Spain, or more correctly against the friars, in 1872 and 1896 bear witness to this awakening. A most eloquent testimony to it is found in the words of one of Rizal's characters, who says:

The country is not the same to-day as it was twenty years ago . . . . If you do not see it, it is because you have not seen the former state, have not studied the effect of the immigration of Europeans, of the entrance of new books, and of the going of the young men to study in Europe. . . . The experimental sciences have already given their first fruits; it needs only time to perfect them. The lawyers of to-day are being trained in the new teachings of legal philosophy; some begin to shine in the midst of the shadows which surround our courts of justice, and point to a change in the course of affairs. . . . One may accompany the course of Progress in three ways, ahead of her, side by side with her, and behind her. . . . Well now, we in the Philippines are traveling along at least three centuries behind the car of Progress; we are barely commencing to emerge from the Middle Ages. . . . The strife is on between the past, which cleaves and clings with curses to the waning feudal castle, and the future, whose song of triumph may be faintly heard off in the distant but splendrous glories of a dawn that is coming, bringing the message of Good News from other countries.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Cf.* Foreman, *The Philippine Islands*, pp. 216-226; Leroy, pp. 151 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, by Leroy, pp. 210-213.



Such then was the situation in the Philippines a short time prior to the American occupation. The Philippines came to us as an unexpected result of the Spanish war. What to do with them we did not know. Every suggested solution seemed to contain serious objections. We could not, in justice to the Filipino people, return the islands to Spain; such a course, moreover, would have been inconsistent with the declared humanitarian grounds upon which we waged the Spanish war. We could not give them independence, because the people were clearly not prepared for it. We could not establish a protectorate and give them internal autonomy, because existing tribal jealousies and political incapacity would have made internal disorder certain; and we could not assume responsibility for the protection of the lives and property of foreigners without at the same time holding the power to meet that responsibility. We could not sell the islands to another power, because public sentiment in the United States would not have countenanced it, and because the sale of the islands to a foreign power might well have caused international complications of a serious character. We could not assume the rôle of a benevolent despot and rule the country as England does her crown colonies, for, whatever might have been the merits of such a policy, it would have been contrary to our national traditions and sentiments and would not have been accepted with favor by the Filipino people. It was accordingly decided that the only practicable course, at all consistent with our national traditions and sentiments and with the ambitions of the Filipino people, was to assume control of the islands ourselves and to extend to their people the rights of self-government as rapidly as they should show their ability wisely to exercise them.

Before discussing the progress of the Filipino people toward self-government since the American occupation, a word will not be amiss concerning the much discussed subject of Filipino national sentiment. There have been three important forces favoring the development of such a sentiment. In the first place, the Filipino people nearly all belong to one ethnic stock: they are Malays. In the second place, they are nearly all believers in the same religion: over ninety per cent of the entire

population are Christians. In the third place, the abuses of the friars and of the other Spanish officials during the latter part of the nineteenth century awakened among the different tribes of the islands a more or less common sentiment of opposition to Spain and in favor of independence. That sentiment in favor of independence grew during the insurrection against the United States and still strongly persists.

No one who has been in the Philippines any length of time can doubt for a moment that the Filipino people, however they may differ on other questions, are to-day overwhelmingly in favor of independence.<sup>1</sup> That fact was clearly shown in the recent Philippine election. There is no word which sounds so sweet to the Filipino's ear as the word *independencia*. To the masses of the people *independencia* is a magic thing which they do not understand but which they intensely want; it is a panacea for all evils, the secret of prosperity and the key to the millennium. Just what it is they do not know, but they know that they want it.<sup>2</sup> There is unquestionably at present a vague but developing sentiment of nationality. The obstacles in the way of the rapid development of such a sentiment are very great, although slowly disappearing.

In the United States we are accustomed to speak of the Filipino people as if they were one homogeneous people. One of the facts that impresses the average American most on traveling through the Philippines is the remarkable isolation of different sections of the islands and even of neighboring villages. At the time of the American occupation there were only about 120 miles of steam railroad in the entire archipelago—a country of about two and a half times the area of New York state. There are now about 200 miles in operation, and about 700 miles in process of construction. Facilities for steamship communication among the islands are very meager; there are few roads that can be used by vehicles and many of these cannot be used during more than eight months of the year.

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hearings before the Secretary of War and the Congressional Party, *etc.*, Manila, Aug. 29, 30, 1905; pp. 6-29.

A surprisingly large number of different dialects is often spoken within a small range of territory. The recent census divides the native population into twenty-four different tribes of which sixteen are wild or savage tribes. The division is tentative and more or less arbitrary. Among the eight so-called civilized tribes there are several times that number of mutually unintelligible Malay dialects or sub-dialects. In 1904 the writer wished to send out a notice to all the people with reference to the new currency; the notice was printed in twenty-one different languages, dialects and sub-dialects, including two Arabic dialects, three varieties of the Bisayan dialect, and two varieties of the Bicol dialect. These circulars did not begin to cover all the dialects and sub-dialects of the islands. In a country where the people are geographically and intellectually so isolated as these facts imply, where there is no common language, literature or tradition, it is hardly necessary to say that any strong sentiment of nationality must develop slowly.

What have we done to prepare the people for self-government, and how have they responded to our efforts?

In a broad sense it may be said that nearly all of the many reforms the American government has brought about in the islands during the last nine years have been factors in the work of preparing the Filipinos for self-government. More specifically to that end, however, two lines of work were undertaken. The first was to educate the people through a system of free public schools, and the second was to train them directly by extending to them the powers of popular self-government as rapidly as they should prove themselves capable of wisely exercising them.

Hardly had the treaty of Paris been signed before the work of establishing free primary schools was begun. Soldiers in the volunteer army were at first detailed to the work of teaching. One of the four great administrative departments into which the Philippine civil government was divided was that of public instruction. It was early decided to establish primary schools throughout the islands, and to place within the reach of every Filipino child the privilege of a primary education. The elaborate plans adopted and now being carried into effect go

much further than primary education. But that comes first, and it is upon that that the greatest emphasis is being placed. Space will not permit an outline of the history of this interesting feature of our work in the Philippines. Sufficient to say that, notwithstanding apparently insurmountable obstacles, much hostile criticism and a number of serious mistakes, an extensive and efficient public-school system is being rapidly established. The plan contemplates three years of primary instruction for all children in the Christian provinces between the ages of six and fifteen, this primary instruction to include three years of English, two years of arithmetic and one year of elementary geography. Supplementary to the primary instruction, all the important towns are to have intermediate schools, which will give three to four years more instruction in the common branches and some work in the natural sciences, as well as courses in agriculture and shop-work and courses for the girls in practical housekeeping. Above the intermediate schools there is to be a provincial high school in the capital of every province. There are also in Manila a normal school and a well-equipped trade school. A medical school has recently been established.<sup>1</sup> The plan is being rapidly put into operation.

How have the Filipinos responded to the public school privileges offered? Experience so far permits a most encouraging answer to this question. From the inauguration of the public school system the Filipinos have swarmed to the schools in such numbers that they could not be accommodated. Every year has shown a large gain in numbers, and recently it has been necessary to raise the age limit to prevent overcrowding. The enrolment in March, 1906, amounted to over 365,000 pupils. This body of pupils was under the instruction of over 800 American teachers and over 6000 native teachers. One of the most hopeful characteristics of the Filipino people is their ambition for an education. They are for the most part zealous and work hard. They are taking kindly to the work in agri-

<sup>1</sup> Act no. 1415 United States Philippine Commission (usually cited as Act 1415 U. S. F. C.).

culture and the mechanic arts, despite their reputed aversion for manual labor.

A little learning, however, as might be expected, frequently gives them excessive self-confidence from which they do not seem readily to recover. There are not wanting many intelligent people in the islands who hold the opinion that it will require two or three generations before the newly acquired learning of the masses will be tempered by anything that we may call sanity of judgment on public questions.

Let us next consider the Filipino as a voter and as an office holder. The policy of the administration was recently described by Governor-General Smith as "the evolution of a government by Americans assisted by Filipinos into a government of Filipinos assisted by Americans, and the education and preparation of the people for popular self-government."<sup>1</sup> To that end the rights of suffrage have been rapidly extended, and preference has been shown to Filipinos in the filling of all public offices. The number of Filipinos in the civil service is large and increasing. It is true that the higher and more responsible positions are to a great extent filled by Americans, but it is the policy of the administration to place Filipinos in these positions as soon as they are found able to fill them.

A few words concerning the present organization of the government will be necessary in order to give an idea of the extent to which Filipinos participate. There are three spheres of government now, as in later Spanish times; the municipal or local government, the provincial government and the central government.

In the sphere of local government Filipino autonomy is almost complete. In 1906 over ninety-nine and a third per cent of all office-holders in the local government were Filipinos. The great majority of local officials are elective.<sup>2</sup> The government of each municipality<sup>3</sup> is "vested in a president, a vice-president and a municipal council" containing from eight to eighteen

<sup>1</sup> *Philippine Official Gazette*, IV (1906).

<sup>2</sup> Phil. Comm. Rep., 1906, I, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> The municipal government is based upon the Philippine Municipal Code (act no. 82, U. S. P. C.) and its amendments.

councillors according to the population of the municipality. Councillors hold office four years.<sup>1</sup> The suffrage in the Philippines is limited to male citizens twenty-three years of age or over, who can "speak, read and write English or Spanish," or who own real property to the value of \$250, or who pay \$15 or more in taxes, or who were office-holders above a certain rank during the Spanish régime.<sup>2</sup> The president is the chief administrative officer of the town and has limited judicial powers. Municipal finances are in the hands of a municipal treasurer appointed by the provincial treasurer, subject to the approval of the provincial board.<sup>3</sup> The principal judicial officer of the town is the local justice of the peace, who is appointed by the Philippine commission from a list of suitable persons, submitted, formerly by the provincial board, but since March 30, 1907, by the district judge of the court of first instance.<sup>4</sup>

It is in the municipal government that the capacity of the Filipino people for self-government can best be tested. Practically all local officials are Filipinos. The absolute number of local officials is large, amounting at the present time to 10,842.<sup>5</sup> In this sphere of government the Filipinos have had more experience both as voters and as office-holders than in any other.

How has Filipino local self-government succeeded? It is impossible to give a positive answer to this question. The available evidence is meager, and what there is, is often contradictory. Moreover, opinions of those in close touch with the situation frequently differ widely.

If in asking the question: Has Filipino local self-government succeeded? one means, has the right been exercised in such a way as to justify the policy of the administration in giving the people local autonomy, I believe the evidence justifies an affirmative answer; but only from the point of view of success as an educational measure, as an instrument in the work of preparing the people for popular self-government. If, on the other hand, it

<sup>1</sup> Until recently the term of office of municipal councillors was two years. *Cf.* Municipal Code, sec. 3, and act no. 1582 U. S. P. C., sec. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Act no. 1582, U. S. P. C., sec. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Act no. 1681, U. S. P. C.

<sup>4</sup> Act no. 1627, U. S. P. C.

<sup>5</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1906, p. 98.

is meant to ask whether experience has justified the frequent contention that the Filipino people are now capable of exercising an efficient popular self-government, I would answer emphatically, no; and in so doing I believe I am expressing the opinion of at least nine-tenths of the Americans and Europeans who have spent any considerable time in the islands. During the two and one-half years I was in the Philippines I never talked with an American or European resident of the islands who believed we were going too slowly. The almost universal opinion among them is that, if we are making any mistake, it is in extending to the people the privileges of self-government too rapidly. The Filipinos have undoubtedly, against severe odds, exercised the political privileges accorded them in the sphere of local government more satisfactorily than their hostile critics expected, and, what is more encouraging, *there are distinct signs of improvement*. In most municipalities the elections have been orderly, and a large number of the officials elected have been capable men. But, while freely granting this, the facts, I believe, force us to the conclusion that the present character of municipal government in the islands would be intolerable as a permanent situation.

The Spanish administration of the islands during the greater part of the nineteenth century was corrupt, from the central government in Manila to the local government in the municipalities, and the Filipinos were for generations given such lessons in political corruption that it is exceedingly difficult for the average native to believe that a government official can be free from graft. In fact he is altogether too liable to look upon graft in office as the normal and expected thing. The following facts and opinions, taken from official documents or from the writings of conservative men who are pro-Filipino in their sympathies, will support this conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

The three principal municipal officers are the municipal president, the municipal treasurer and the justice of the peace.

<sup>1</sup> In the interpretation of the figures that follow it should be born in mind that "for obvious reasons the Government has acted on the theory that Filipino officials ought not to be as yet . . . held up to the standards required of Americans." Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1906, p. 68.

At the end of the year 1905 there were about 600 municipal presidents in the islands. During that year charges were brought against 122, and in 51 of these cases the presidents were found guilty. The four principal charges upon which convictions were made were, in the order of their importance: (1) neglect of duty, (2) abuse of position, (3) malversation and breaches of trust, (4) bribery and kindred crimes.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the year 1906 there were 678 municipal presidents in the islands. During that year charges were brought against 55; in 16 of these cases the presidents were found guilty, in seven not guilty, while in 32 the charges are classified as "filed without action by governor-general." The principal charges upon which convictions were made in 1906 were: (1) abuse of official position, (2) neglect of duties, (3) violations of law, (4) extortion.<sup>2</sup>

The official reports do not give the figures concerning municipal treasurers. It is a well-known fact, however, that there has been a large amount of peculation among these officials in recent years.

The supervisor of fiscals said in his report for 1904 concerning the native justices of the peace<sup>3</sup>:

I have . . . referred to the incompetency and ignorance of many of the justices of the peace. Instead of "many" I could have said "most," and might even have employed a stronger term. . . . Sometimes, and only too frequently, in addition to their ignorance these justices are found to be either grossly dishonest or else under the influence of a sharp and tricky secretary . . . who from his superior education and intelligence, dominates the justice of the peace, exercises a strong influence and preys upon the wretched inhabitants of the community. With these men the motto in all too many cases is, "a public office is a public graft," and they prey upon the poor people of the country like wild beasts. . . . I trust I may not be charged with drawing too lurid a picture of this evil. My endeavor is to state only facts as they have come to my knowledge, not only during the last year, but in several years' previous experience in these Islands.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. Comm. Rep., 1905, I, pp. 101, 115.

<sup>2</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1906, pp. 93-95, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. Comm. Rep., 1904, III, p. 415.



Of the 620 justices of the peace in the islands in 1905, 124 resigned, and 29 were removed for cause. One hundred charges were proven against justices of the peace during the year 1905, of which 23 were for extortion, 17 for breaches of financial trusts, 12 for various kinds of "graft," and 39 for the common crimes of abusing power, including the malicious ordering of arrests. Only two charges of incapacity were proved.<sup>1</sup> In February, 1906, an act was passed reorganizing the justice of the peace system and since that time there has been a marked improvement in the character of the justices.<sup>2</sup> During the year 1906 there were 624 justices of the peace in the islands and charges were brought against only 47. Of this number, one was found not guilty, 12 were found guilty and action was suspended in the case of 34.<sup>3</sup>

The records show that, in 1903, 76 municipal officials (exclusive of municipal treasurers) were removed on charges. In 1904, the number increased to 79 and, in 1905, to 106.

The record for 1906, though not a bright one, shows distinct signs of improvement. During that year 212 municipal officials (exclusive of municipal treasurers) were tried. Of this number 51 were found not guilty, 69 were found guilty and action was suspended in the case of 92. Against these 212 persons 379 different charges were made; convictions were sustained in 148 charges, no action was taken in 165, while the officials were found not guilty in 66.<sup>4</sup>

An investigation made in 1906, by direction of the governor-general, of the municipal elections in the province of Oriental Negros, brought out the surprising fact that 92 out of the 157 councillors elected, or 59 per cent, lacked the legal qualifications for their offices. Each of the disqualified persons, however, had taken an oath of office in which he had solemnly sworn that he possessed the qualifications prescribed by law. There had been no protests against the election of these dis-

<sup>1</sup> Phil. Comm. Rep., 1905, I, pp. 114 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1906, I, pp. 57, 107, 108.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1906, pp. 93-95, 98.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

qualified persons, and in every case the election had been confirmed by the provincial board.<sup>1</sup>

When we pass from the local government to provincial and central government the evidence concerning the present political capacity of the Filipinos is fortunately more favorable.

The provincial government of each of the 37 provinces is in charge of a provincial board consisting of three members: (1) the provincial governor, who in the Christian provinces is regularly a Filipino,<sup>2</sup> and who is elected every two years by popular suffrage<sup>3</sup> at the same time that delegates to the Philippine Assembly are elected; (2) the provincial treasurer, who at present, in every case, is an American, and who is appointed by the governor-general with the consent of the Philippine Commission; (3) the third member, who was until recently an American appointive officer,<sup>4</sup> but who in the future is to be a Filipino elected by popular suffrage at the regular biennial elections. The provincial board in the civilized provinces will accordingly henceforward consist of two Filipinos and one American. Most of the other provincial officers are Filipinos. They held 75 per cent of the provincial offices in 1906.<sup>5</sup> The positions are largely appointive, under the examination requirements of the Philippine civil-service law.

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary, 1906, pp. 67, 68. The Executive Secretary referring to the above situation says that it "can be explained only on the ground of dense ignorance, gross negligence, or wilful and deliberate perjury. The provincial board (which investigated the situation) ascribes it to negligence. . . . In a province where such negligence abounds, it is difficult to understand how good autonomous government can be expected. This disgraceful condition of affairs . . . naturally brings up the question whether like conditions exist in still other provinces, or whether the trouble is merely local. I am unable to answer the question for lack of data, but it certainly was not local in Oriental Negros."

<sup>2</sup> In 1906, 29 of the 38 provincial governors in the Islands were Filipinos, and 9 were Americans. The number of provinces was reduced to 37 on July 2, 1907, by the annexing of Romblou to Capiz. *Philippine Official Gazette*, V (1907), pp. 401, 402.

<sup>3</sup> Until the law of January 9, 1907, elective provincial governors were elected by the members of the various town councils of their respective provinces.

<sup>4</sup> Originally the third member was the provincial supervisor, a civil engineer. When the position of supervisor was abolished, the position of third member was usually given to the district superintendent of schools.

<sup>5</sup> Fifth Ann. Rep. of Exec. Sec., 1906, p. 97.

Opinions differ widely as to the ability of the average Filipino provincial governor, until recently the only elective official of importance in the provincial government. The powers of the governors have heretofore been so circumscribed by the two American members of the provincial board that it is impossible to pass a very definite judgment concerning their efficiency. Many of them are respected everywhere for integrity and ability; unfortunately some of them are not. There has undoubtedly been a large amount of corruption in connection with gubernatorial elections. Of the 32 provincial governors elected in 1903, the elections of 13 were contested. Twelve of these were subsequently confirmed by the civil governor on the ground, that although "in a number of the cases, . . . grave irregularities" existed, the evidence offered was not such as to show that they altered the results.<sup>1</sup> The elections of 15 of the 29 provincial governors elected in 1905 were contested "upon various grounds, such as alleged purchase of votes, coercion and intimidation of voters, allowing unqualified persons to vote, and the use of marked ballots." The governor-general reported that "all the regular elections" were confirmed but two.<sup>2</sup>

The number of removals and resignations at request or under charges, of provincial officials in 1903 was 15, in 1904 it was 12 (for thirteen months), in 1905 it was six and in 1906 it was only one.<sup>3</sup>

Now that the municipal and provincial governments have been considered, let us pass to the central government. The chief executive of the Philippine Islands is an American governor-general appointed by the president of the United States with the consent of the Senate. There are four large administrative departments, each presided over by a secretary. The departments are highly centralized, and all the secretaries are Americans appointed by the president of the United States, with the consent of the Senate. A large and increasing proportion of the officers and clerks employed in the various departments are Filipinos.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. Comm. Rep., 1904, I, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1906, I, pp. 81, 116-120.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth Ann. Rep. of Exec. Secretary, p. 32. The above figures include a few Americans.

The judiciary of the central government consists of a supreme court of seven members appointed by the president of the United States, a court of land registration, and fifteen district courts. Three of the seven judges of the supreme court, including the chief justice, are Filipinos, as likewise is the judge of the court of land registration, and ten of the twenty-two judges of the court of first instance.<sup>1</sup>

The more important Filipino officials in the executive and judicial departments of the central government, as well as the Filipino members of the Commission, are almost without exception honest and capable men who hold the respect of the entire community. These men, however, can hardly be considered as proof of the political capacity of the Filipino people, and that for three reasons: (1) they are very few in number, (2) they have been appointed and not elected, (3) a large proportion of them are not of pure Filipino blood.

The central legislative body is composed of two houses: (1) the upper house or the Philippine Commission, consisting of the governor-general, the four American secretaries of departments, and three Filipinos, all appointed by the president of the United States; and (2) the lower house or Philippine Assembly, for which elections were held on July 30, 1907,<sup>2</sup> and which convened for the first time on October 16. The Assembly consists of 80 members, elected by popular suffrage<sup>3</sup> and "apportioned . . . among the provinces as nearly as practicable according to population." A delegate's term of office is two years. The Assembly possesses coördinate legislative powers with the Philippine Commission.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Philippine Official Gazette*, V (1907), pp. 471, 472.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. act no. 1582 U. S. P. C., entitled "An act to provide for the holding of elections in the Philippine Islands, for the organization of the Philippine assembly, and for other purposes," passed January 9, 1907. *Philippine Official Gazette*, V (1907), pp. 109-122.

<sup>3</sup> The suffrage qualifications are the same as those for electors in municipal elections. *Supra*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Provision is made in the act of Congress, approved July 1, 1902 (sec. 7): "That if at the termination of any session the appropriations necessary for the support of the Government shall not have been made, an amount equal to the sums appropriated in the last appropriation bills for such purposes shall be deemed to be appropriated; and until the Legislature shall act in such behalf the Treasurer may, with the advice of the Governor, make the payments necessary for the purposes aforesaid."

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